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MY CRUCIFIX AND OTHER VERSES

BY

CAROLINE HARRIS GALLAGHER.

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MY CRUCIFIX

AND OTHER VERSES.

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IN LOVING GRATITUDE

I LAY THIS LITTLE OFFERING AT THE FEET OF

OUR DEAR LORD

IN

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

C. H. G.

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MY CRUCIFIX.

A little metal crucifix,
As plain as it can be,
But only God in Heaven knows
How dear it is to me.

I have it always with me,
In every step I take,
At evening when I slumber,
At morning when I wake.

In bright or cloudy weather,
In sunshine or in rain,
In happiness or sorrow,
In pleasure or in pain.

It helps me in my struggles,
It reproves me when I sin,
Its look of gentle patience
Rebukes the strife within.

In days of pain and anguish,
The greatest help I knew
Was to hold that little crucifix
Until I calmer grew;

And looking on that Figure
Which hung in patience there,
I saw the dreadful torture
Which He in love did bear.

His Feet are nailed together,
His loving Arms outspread,
And blood is dropping slowly
Down from His thorn-crowned Head.

And how could I then murmur,
Or bitterly complain,
When love for me induced Him
To undergo such pain?

So when the time approaches
That I will have to die,
I hope that little crucifix
Will close beside me lie;

That the Holy Name of Jesus
May be the last I say;
And kissing that dear crucifix,
My soul may pass away.

A THOUGHT.

I know a church, where, high above the altar
Within a niche, a lovely statue stands,
Our Holy Mother, robed in white, and holding
A rosary within Her folded hands.

Far, far above the kneeling congregation
She stands, Her face upturned to Heaven in prayer,
As though for us to Jesus interceding,
Imploring blessings on Her children there.

I love to look upon that fair, sweet figure,
And watch the flickering shadows come and go
Across Her snowy robe, Her face so tender,
And feel that I, though I am far below,

Am not too far for Her dear love to reach me,
And as She stands there, praying night and day,
She pleads for me, and in Her heart so loving,
She keeps a place for me, and will alway.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Across the hills the Shepherd comes,
  Looking to left and right,
Striving to find the little sheep
  That strayed away last night.

Thorns wound the gentle Shepherd's hands,
  Stones bruise His tender feet,
But on He goes, and cries aloud
  In tones most wondrous sweet,

"My little one, where hidest thou?
  I've looked for thee all day;
If thou canst hear Me calling thee,
  O answer Me, I pray.

"The night is quickly closing in,
  And soon wild beasts will roam;
O come to Me, My little one,
  And I will take thee home."

The Shepherd stops and listens,
When presently He hears
A cry so plaintive, that His eyes
Are dimmed with sudden tears;

And looking in the bushes,
Where thorns and briars grow,
He sees the wayward little sheep,
Its foolish head laid low.

The blood is trickling from its side,
Its wounds are wide and deep,
Its glazing eyes are almost closed,
Though not, alas, in sleep.

The tender Shepherd stooping down,
Pushes the thorns aside,
And lifting up the trembling sheep,
Kisses its wounds so wide.

He strokes its head with gentle touch,
And murmurs words of love,
The little sheep lies mute and still,
Without the power to move.

For no reproach, no word of blame
Answers its guilty fears,
But on its soiled and bloody fleece
Fall hot and blinding tears.

The wondering sheep looks upward
Into the Shepherd's face,
And seeing there such yearning love,
Such plenitude of grace,

It cries, "Forgive me, Master,
For all my sinful past,
Thy love has touched my erring heart,
O take me home at last."

THE ALTAR LIGHT.

Before the snowy altar
  There hangs a humble light,
To show that God is present,
  Though hidden from our sight.

A faithful vigil keeping,
  It shines there night and day,
A star of hope to guide us
  When clouds obscure our way.

It burns with throbbing radiance,
  Like some warm, loving heart,
Which beats with eager longing
  Its fervor to impart.

What rapture would be ours,
  If, like the little light,
We could in Jesus' presence
  Spend every day and night,

And, with our hearts on fire
  With love's intensest ray,
Our lives in pure devotion
  Might burn themselves away!

THE MONTH OF MAY.

Once again in joy and brightness
Comes the lovely month of May,
And before our Mother's altar
We Her children kneel and pray;

While with tender grace and pity
Mary turns to Her dear Son,
Asking Him in love to pardon
All the evil we have done.

On the past we look with sorrow,
Thinking of our many falls,
But we rise again with courage
As our loving Mother calls.

She is calling now to tell us
That we must outlive the past,
Make the present bright and holy,
This month better than the last.

And with words of cheer and comfort
She will guide our straying feet
Back to Him from whom we've wandered,
To His love so strong and sweet.

Love beyond all human knowledge
Jesus for His Mother bears,
And He always listens gladly
To Her interceding prayers.

Therefore we will humbly ask Her
To obtain for us each day
Some new grace, some heavenly blessing,
Strength to walk the narrow way.

We will bring Her choicest flowers,
Lights to burn around Her shrine:
Every blossom holds a promise,
Every light speaks hope divine.

Brighter, though, than lights or flowers
Are the gifts which we can make;
Daily trials, heavy crosses,
We can bear for Her dear sake.

As She looks upon our burdens,
At Her feet we lay them down,
She will offer them to Jesus,
Radiant jewels for His crown.

For each act of self-denial
In Her hands becomes pure gold,
And each tear a glittering diamond
Worth far more than wealth untold.

Thus to Jesus and His Mother
Let us bring in love to-day
Richest gifts and dearest treasures,
To adorn the month of May.

LORD, HELP ME!

Days of sickness, nights of anguish,
Thou dost send in love to me,
May I then, O dearest Jesus,
Bear them well for love of Thee.

Thou for me didst suffer torture,
Thou for me Thy life laid down,
And I know that I must also
Bear the cross to wear the crown.

Thou hast said that we must meekly
Follow in Thy path of pain :
Teach me then, O gentle Saviour,
Never to complain again.

When a fearful weight oppresses,
And I struggle hard for breath,
As I lie thus panting, gasping,
How I long for quiet death !

O forgive me, Lord, this weakness,
Send me courage to endure,
Patience to submit in all things,
Till it pleases Thee to cure.

But, if it should be that always
I must bear this heavy cross,
O my God, I pray Thee help me,
Keep my soul from endless loss.

For my heart grows faint within me
As I look out on the years
That are coming, bringing with them
Hours of pain and bitter tears.

Only Thou, O God, canst aid me
In those hours of sore distress,
Stand beside me then, I pray Thee,
In Thy pity soothe and bless.

So to Thee I humbly offer
Every pain which Thou shalt send,
Asking that Thy love so tender
May sustain me to the end.

When at last, the struggle over,
Thou wilt send me sweet release,
May my soul cleansed, purged by suffering,
Through Thy mercy, rest in peace.

HOLY COMMUNION.

The hour has come which fills our hearts with gladness,
And on the altar waits the King of Kings,
O Lord most High, we humbly bow before Thee,
While unseen angels fold their snowy wings.

Thou comest down in love to us Thy children,
Though often we have strayed away from Thee;
But, calling us once more in tender mercy,
Thou givest us Thyself our food to be.

Not in mere form, but in the very substance,
The Flesh and Blood which died on Calvary,
But living now upon our earthly altars,
Thy Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

O dearest Lord, how can we bear such rapture!
Over our souls break waves of purest love,
Joy too intense for angels' comprehension,
Peace deep and true Thou sendest from above.

The time is short, too soon the hour is ended;
Reluctantly we leave the holy place,
But we have gained new strength to bear our burdens,
Our souls are flooded with Thy heavenly grace.

THE HIDDEN GOD.

On the altar Thou art dwelling,
Pure and bright,
Holy angels watch around Thee
Day and night.

Only eyes of faith behold Thee
Resting there,
In the little Host Thou hidest,
White and fair.

Moon and sun grow pale before Thee;
Thy great light
Fills the heavens, and illumines
Earth's dark night.

Sons of men could scarcely bear it,
Shouldst Thou show
One brief glimpse of Thy bright radiance
Here below.

When Thou dwelt on earth Incarnate,
Thou didst hide
All Thy splendor, and in meekness
Here abide.

So from us in love Thou veilest
Rays too bright;
Angels gaze in awe and wonder
At the sight.

For to weak and sinful mortals
Thou dost give
Thy dear Self, that, healed and strengthened,
They may live.

Thou art dwelling with Thy children
Evermore,
Thy Real Presence on the altar
We adore.

Bread of angels, heavenly manna,
Feed us now,
As before Thy hidden glory
Low we bow.

THE INFANT JESUS.

How beautiful Thou art, O Infant Jesus,
Resting in silence on Thy lowly bed !
Thy holy Mother kneels in love beside Thee,
And strokes with gentle touch Thy little head;

While near at hand are wondering shepherds gazing,
The ox and ass are standing close to Thee;
O wonderful, that this poor, humble stable
Should be the home of God's Divinity!

Thine eyes are glowing with love's fervent fire,
Thy hands held out as if to draw us near;
Can we resist those tiny hands' mute pleading,
Or turn away from eyes so pure and clear ?

Some day those hands will bear for us the torture
Of cruel nails piercing each tender palm,
Those eyes will weep for us sad tears of sorrow;
Our sins will bring Thee gall instead of balm.

That little head which now Thy Mother kisses
Will wear for us some day a thorny crown,
And from Thy heart which now is throbbing softly
Streams of Thy blood will flow in mercy down.

And, as we look upon Thee lying helpless,
Poor and neglected on Thy bed of hay,
Our hearts go out to Thee in love and sorrow,
We long to offer Thee some gift to-day.

Our hands we give Thee, O dear Infant Jesus,
Used for Thine honor may they always be;
Our feet we give Thee, may they never falter,
But bravely tread the path that leads to Thee.

This Christmas Day we bring to Thee, sweet Jesus,
Our hearts, our souls, our lives, our every thought:
Accept them now, and keep them Thine forever,
The treasures which Thy Precious Blood has bought.

JUST ONCE MORE.

As I look from out my window
To the church across the way,
How my heart is yearning, longing
Just to enter there and pray;
But the Hand of God has held me
To my room for many a day.

Ah, how clearly I can picture
Each dear spot within those walls,
See how every light and shadow
On each sacred object falls,
Feel the thrill of that deep silence
Which to true devotion calls.

Oh, to spend one little hour
Just once more in that dear place!
Just to feel at Benediction
That I kneel before God's face,
Just to know that in that moment
He will touch my soul with grace.

Just once more to steal at twilight
In the shadows soft and gray
To the altar, where in mercy
Jesus waits all night and day,
Whispering to each heart some message,
Drawing souls from sin away.

Oh my God, subdue this longing,
Just once more Thy grace impart,
Let me have true resignation,
Bid all restless thoughts depart;
Every troubled hour I offer
To Thy peaceful, quiet Heart.

DOMINE, MEMENTO MEI.

"Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom."—St. Luke xxiii. 42.

Lord, remember me!
I know my sins are great,
But ere it is too late,
O send Thy grace to me.

Lord, remember me!
Forget my stubborn will,
My many deeds of ill,
All that displeaseth Thee.

Lord, remember me!
The cross is on me laid.
I cry to Thee for aid
To bear it patiently.

Lord, remember me!
In sorrow's darkest hour
Thou only hast the power
To help and comfort me.

Lord, remember me!
My every pain and loss
I nail unto Thy cross,
So Thou wilt think of me.

Lord, remember me!
And when the strife is past,
Thy kingdom come at last,
Take me to dwell with Thee.

SURSUM CORDA.

Lift up your hearts! High on the altar white,
Christ rests enthroned, 'mid brilliant beams of light,
Shedding o'er clouded souls a heavenly ray,
Turning their darkness into glorious day.

Lift up your hearts! O you in trouble sore,
Look unto Him, your tears shall flow no more,
For He our King, who died on Calvary,
Opens His Heart to you so lovingly.

Lift up your hearts! Into His riven side
Take all your sorrows, and in peace abide;
Protected there, while raging tempests beat,
You shall obtain a refuge safe and sweet.

Lift up your hearts! When from your daily path
God takes your dearest one, 'tis not in wrath,
But for some loving end, some purpose wise,
Which now is hidden from your tear-dimmed eyes.

Lift up your hearts! When death's cold waters roll
Nearer and nearer to each trembling soul,
Jesus Himself will quiet all alarms,
And take you gently in His loving arms.

Lift up your hearts! With eyes of faith behold
The walls of jasper and the streets of gold,
Your home at last, when, cleansed and purified
By fiery trials, you are glorified.

ALONE WITH GOD.

The hour of Benediction now is over,
The throng that filled the church has passed away,
The countless lights upon the great high altar
Go out, like stars before the break of day.

The church is wrapt in silence, shadows gather,
And darkness curtains in the holy place,
Upon the altar only rests a brightness,
Where dwells concealed the Source of every grace.

The golden lamp whose light is always burning
Glows like a ruby with a heart of flame,
The Tabernacle door is touched with crimson,
And light falls softly on The Holy Name.

Oh, what a peaceful, quiet, solemn hour!
The world and worldly cares shut out of sight,
And only *God and I* within the silence—
Alone within the shadows of the night.

Alone with Him. No earthly words are spoken,
And yet my soul before its God lies bare:
Alone with Him. My every joy and sorrow
The mighty King of Kings bows down to share.

Alone with God. No human eye to witness,
No human voice to utter praise or blame;
God only: He, just Judge, yet loving Saviour,
Speaks to my heart, and calls me by my name.

* * * * * * * * * *

Oh, could the hour stay; but time is fleeting,
The night wears on: this heavenly joy must cease;
But in my heart there echoes, "Nunc dimittis"—
"Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant go in peace."

THE SACRED HEART.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus,
To Thee our hearts we bring,
The only gift Thou askest,
Our Saviour and our King;
Take them, O loving Jesus,
And light within each one
A flame more clear and radiant,
More brilliant than the sun.

Touch with Thy quickening fire
Those that seem cold and dead,
Over each frozen conscience
Rays of Thy brightness shed;
Burn from our hearts forever
All that offends Thine eyes,
Kindle instead within them
The love that purifies.

In days made dark by sorrow,
To Thy Heart pure and bright
We look, and in its glory
Our darkness turns to light;
When on our hearts so weary
Death's cold, gray shadows fall,
Into Thy Heart's sweet refuge
Thy tired children call.

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